



*600 members in 12 shoreline and surrounding towns  
safeguarding fundamental human rights through grassroots action*

**Testimony in Support of HB 5251  
AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR  
UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS IN THIS STATE**

Connecticut Shoreline Indivisible (CTSI) is a non-partisan grass roots organization and a member of the Connecticut Immigrant Rights Alliance. Our mission includes a strong commitment to creating a more just society by addressing systemic injustice and racism. To that end, our Immigration & Refugee Action Team defends the human and civil rights of immigrants in a broad spectrum of contexts which ranges from supporting specific families threatened by deportation to promoting laws that embody equitable principles and policies.

One of the most fundamental human rights is the right to health care. Although we are still too far away from guaranteeing health care for everyone, creating a taskforce is a pragmatic step that Connecticut can take to make health care accessible and affordable for undocumented residents who too often delay and forego health care because they don't have insurance coverage. It is essential that this taskforce include representatives from both immigrant rights and health care advocacy organizations.

We ask you to imagine what it would be like if you or a loved one were in the midst of a medical emergency and had to consider, at the same time, whether you would be able to pay for the cost of medical services? Or, if you needed medication to slow the progression of a chronic condition but you couldn't afford to buy it? Or, if you delayed care for a seemingly minor infection, but because you put off seeing a doctor, the infection became systemic and life-threatening? These are the kind of dilemmas and heartbreak that undocumented immigrants face every day when making decisions about health care.

Besides the compelling humanitarian reasons why this bill should be enacted into law, it is unfair that a community that contributes approximately 145 million dollars in state and local taxes each year does not have the same rights as other taxpayers. People who contribute so much to our state welfare should not be discriminated against solely because of their immigration status.

It is also worth pointing out that making health insurance accessible to undocumented immigrants, or other immigrants currently barred from coverage, benefits everyone in the state by protecting our public health as well as by lowering uncompensated care costs that otherwise would be assumed by both the private and public sectors.

We strongly urge the Committee to support HB 5251 and give the bill a favorable report.

Jane Nadel  
Policy Coordinator, CTSI Immigration & Refugee Action Team